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New York

President:	Mr. Rycroft	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Mahamat Zene
	Chile	Mr. Olgu[illegible]n Cigarroa
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
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	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Suárez Moreno

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Burundi and Uganda to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Alain Aimé Nyamitwe, Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation of Burundi, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Bujumbura, the technology permitting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, and given the seriousness of the situation and the requirement that the Security Council act and not look aside, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Mr. Adama Dieng, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide; Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Al Hussein, Mr. Dieng and Mr. Lauber, who are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva, Jordan and Bujumbura, respectively.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I take this opportunity to remind speakers of the President's intention to use flashing lights on the microphones to prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close, as we have a number of participants in this meeting and it is an important issue. I therefore encourage speakers to make concise statements.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Burundi.

One year ago, on 5 November 2014, the Security Council held its last discussion on the United Nations Office in Burundi (see S/PV.7295) before it closed at the end of the year at the request of the Burundian Government. In the briefing given to the Council, the then-Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, underlined our hope that the groundwork laid by Burundian authorities to preserve stability and consolidate democracy would not be reversed during the 2015 electoral cycle.

Today, one year later, Burundi finds itself in a deep political crisis and rapid escalation of violence that has serious implications for stability and ethnic harmony in Burundi, as well as for peace and security in the region. The political, economic, social and security gains that came out of the landmark Arusha Agreement are already at risk. The killing, on 22 May, of Zedi Feruzi, a key opposition figure, marked the beginning of a troubling pattern of politically motivated assassinations and attacks. Neither the conclusion of Burundi's legislative and presidential electoral cycle this summer nor the inclusion of some key opposition figures in the governing coalition calmed the situation, which has instead grown more troubling. As the High Commissioner for Human Rights will further elaborate, the number of reported human rights violations and casualties is rising by the day and spreading beyond Bujumbura.

In the capital the situation is currently very tense. Several neighbourhoods, especially those perceived to have opposed President Nkurunziza's third term, experience nightly exchanges of gunshots and grenade explosions. Traumatized residents frequently discover mutilated bodies, victims of executions. Just this morning, at least two people were killed in a grenade attack in the Musaga neighbourhood in Bujumbura. On 7 November, at least nine people, including a United Nations staff member, were killed when unknown gunmen opened fire inside a bar in the Kanyosha neighbourhood in Bujumbura. The bar was alleged to have been a previous meeting venue of anti-third-mandate demonstrators. Saturday's incident is the second time within a month that a staff member of the United Nations family in Burundi has been killed. The High Commissioner for Human Rights will provide other examples of human rights violations and killings.

In this very tense environment, inflammatory and chilling public statements from authorities have provoked concern and alarm in Burundi, the region

and beyond. In a 29 October speech, the President of the Senate, Mr. Révérien Ndikuriyo, told local administrators to be ready and to set their emotions aside if a signal were given to the police to "go to work", which has been widely interpreted as implying a pre-planned operation. He also said that "plots of land are about to be available".

On 2 November, President Nkurunziza gave armed civilians five days to surrender their arms or face being dealt with as "enemies of the nation". The President said that the police have the right to use "all available means" to find illegally possessed arms. While police forces do have the right and responsibility to maintain law and order many incidents, described as crackdown activities appear to cross the line into extra-judiciary attacks, striking fear among the residents of some neighbourhoods. Consequently, we have received reports that the President's ultimatum has prompted a large number of people living in affected neighbourhoods to flee their homes, ahead of the deadline this past weekend.

Many recent statements have also been interpreted as having an ethnic dimension, contrary to the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which ended Burundi's civil war. The Secretary-General has strongly condemned such dangerous incitement.

The crisis in Burundi is political at its core and cannot be resolved by a security clampdown. It is not credible to claim that a small group of criminals or traitors are behind the current violence. The problem is much deeper, and therefore more worrying. To address the deteriorating situation, Burundian leaders will need to address the political deadlock that preceded and transcended the summer elections. In that regard, the Government of Burundi has established a commission for inter-Burundian dialogue, said to be open to all except those implicated in the failed coup d'état on 14 May.

While the United Nations in general supports national dialogue efforts, the Commission will not be able to make progress in the tense security context where members of political parties and civil society are frequently found dead on the streets. With many media outlets closed down since spring and opposition leaders abroad afraid to return home, the Government has not established the conditions for credible and inclusive political dialogue. We encourage the Burundian authorities to do so as quickly as possible.

On 17 October, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council agreed on a multi-pronged approach to address the situation in Burundi. It included increasing the number of its human rights observers and military experts and the initiation of contingency planning for the possible deployment of an African-led mission in the country. The Peace and Security Council also gave its strong support to the resumption of a political dialogue in Kampala or Addis Ababa, with the facilitation of Uganda.

The United Nations is in close consultation with the African Union Commission on how to provide technical and logistical assistance and expertise to advance the implementation of the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council. We have also offered to provide support and assistance to the Ugandan-led facilitation under the rubric of the East African Community (EAC). In the coming days, the Secretary-General will announce the appointment of a Special Adviser who will lead and coordinate United Nations efforts in support of Burundi. The Special Adviser will work closely with the AU, the EAC and other partners to prevent a further escalation of the conflict and to build peace in Burundi.

The sharp deterioration of the political and security situation is happening at a time when the mandate of the current political mission — the United Nations Electoral Observation Mission in Burundi — is ending. There is clearly a need for continuing political engagement and presence on the ground to support Burundi during these difficult times. But that requires a mandate from the Security Council and the cooperation of the Government of Burundi.

Burundi finds itself at a critical juncture. A political solution must be found to resolve the crisis before it spirals out of control and affects peace and security regionally. We hope that all international partners, particularly those in the region, speak with one voice in urging and supporting Burundi to find a political settlement to the crisis. The Secretary-General calls on all Burundian parties, inside the country and abroad, to cease immediately the propagation of hate speech, to renounce violence and to engage in good faith with the ongoing facilitation of the East African Community. The United Nations is prepared to do what we can do support a credible and inclusive dialogue that can address the deep political challenges the country currently faces. We must all work to ensure that it takes place and succeeds.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Al Hussein.

Mr. Al-Hussein: I regret to report my deepening concern with regard to the increasingly grave human rights crisis in Burundi. In addition to the rising death toll, I must alert the Security Council to warning signs of further escalation, including potentially very serious regional repercussions. The country is at another crucial and extremely dangerous tipping point, and I believe that Member States and the Council can intervene effectively to prevent the repetition of past horrors.

Within Burundi, and particularly in Bujumbura, there have been increasing numbers of extrajudicial killings documented in recent months, including multiple alleged political assassinations. At least 240 people have been killed since protests began in April, with bodies dumped on the streets on almost a nightly basis. There have been hundreds of cases of arbitrary arrests and detention in the past month alone, targeting members of the opposition, journalists, human rights defenders and their families, people attending the funerals of those who have been killed and inhabitants of neighbourhoods perceived to be supportive of the opposition.

I am glad to note that the intervention of my Office, in cooperation with the Burundian authorities, resulted in the release of 340 detainees last month. However, people who express divergent views from the Government continue to live in a climate of intense fear. The abduction and murder just three days ago of 25-year-old Welly Nzitonda, son of a well-known human rights defender, Pierre Claver Mbonimpa, is one very recent and painful example. During an attempt on his life in August, Mr. Mbonimpa was himself badly wounded. His son-in-law, another human rights defender, was killed last month.

Many credible allegations of torture have been documented, notably at a locality in Bujumbura run by the national intelligence service. Violations have also been reported on the part of the national police and by the heavily armed police unit that was created in September "to fight against acts of terrorism". The Imbonerakure militia, associated with the ruling party, continues to terrorize the population, sometimes in collaboration with the police, and perpetrates human rights abuses with total impunity. Specific neighbourhoods have been locked down by police, with reports of gun battles. Unidentified, but apparently well armed and organized, individuals opposed to the Government are also committing killings.

Fear of the violence and the spectre of more bloodshed are driving ordinary Burundians out of their homes. There are now well over 280,000 internally displaced persons and refugees across the Great Lakes region. To make matters worse, it is reported that armed groups are recruiting in some refugee camps in neighbouring countries and that agents of the Burundi Government are also present to identify opponents.

Those and other signs of a suddenly escalating regionalization of the crisis lead me to emphasize that host countries must ensure that the camps are duly protected and remain civilian in nature.

President Nkurunziza announced the opening of a process of national dialogue in September. However, I regret to report that to date it has fallen short of the truly inclusive discussion that would effectively put the country back on a path to peace. Repeated killings of opposition leaders and human rights defenders and their families sharply undermine the Government's verbal commitments to reconciliation, as do recent requests for the arrests of members of the opposition and human rights defenders in exile in Europe and a tone of intense hostility in public statements.

Last week, as we just heard from the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, President Nkurunziza set an ultimatum for Burundians to hand in all weapons, warning that those who would not do so would be dealt with as enemies of the nation. That ultimatum has led many Burundians to flee their neighbourhoods for fear of police sweeps and crackdowns. Earlier today, one policeman and four civilians were reportedly killed in the Musaga neighbourhood of Bujumbura.

Recent inflammatory remarks by members of the Government have suggested that this crisis, which has involved targeting people for their perceived political affiliations, could increasingly taken on an ethnic dimension.

The President of the Senate recently ordered local authorities to identify, "elements which are not in order", and to report them to the police to be dealt with. He also called on the police to get ready to "finish the work". Phrases such as those recall language that this region has heard before and should not be hearing again. They could signal the imminence of much worse and more widespread violence.

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court recently, and rightly, reaffirmed that anyone who incited or engaged in acts of mass violence in Burundi may be subject to prosecution by her Office. I strongly support her statement.

The crisis in Burundi has been escalating for many months. The resulting loss of life, economic collapse, increasing hunger and mass displacement do not only threaten peace and stability in the country, but also across the region. The individuals responsible, regardless of rank, position or political affiliation, must be held to account. All possible influence must be brought to bear to halt what may be an imminent catastrophe.

None of us can forget the waves of killings that generated such horrific loss of life and mass displacement in the region two decades ago. I believe that the strong interventions of many officials and States in recent days may have great influence. I urge neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region to step up their attempts to promote a credible and inclusive political dialogue in Burundi and to ensure that border areas and refugee camps in their respective national territories are not used by any actors to fuel the conflict.

I welcome the investigation to be carried out in Burundi by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as the African Union's efforts to address impunity by placing 100 human rights observers on the ground. It is essential that the international community is able to respond swiftly and decisively if events deteriorate further. I urge the Burundi Government to sign a memorandum of understanding with the African Union for its human rights observers to operate in Burundi, as well as to allow the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to do its work and make its report public as soon as possible.

Moreover, although the efforts of Burundi's neighbours and regional partners will be essential, I also believe it is the responsibility of the Security Council to address a situation of profound concern, well known for many months, and which could lead to even greater carnage. I appeal to the Council to keep Burundi at the top of its agenda and to explore all possible options to prevent further violence, including steps to freeze the assets of those who would incite or who incite or engage in violence, and possible travel bans. The Council may also wish to consider involving Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to stop the ongoing violence and prevent a regional conflict.

The Government of Burundi should be apprised of the very serious consequences that will ensue if it fails in its duty to protect all Burundians regardless of their political opinions or other affiliations. I also ask the Council and all Member States to give financial and political support to the efforts of the African Union to conduct human rights investigations in Burundi and to assist the cause of peace. My Office will be discussing how best to provide our support to the African Commission investigation this week.

It is essential that an all-inclusive dialogue take place among all stakeholders in Burundi in accordance with the Arusha Agreement, which put an end to 12 years of massacres and warfare. The dialogue should be led in coordination with the mediation process.

The urgent disarming of the Imbonerakure militia and all those who illegally possess arms must figure high on the agenda. Against the longstanding claims by the Government that armed militias do not exist within the Imbonerakure, there is indisputable evidence to the contrary. If the Government has any hope of reining in the violence, it needs to begin by disarming the Imbonerakure and ensuring that police and the national intelligence service members who have been responsible for human rights violations are brought to book. It is also vital that all opinion leaders realize that speech that incites violence must be avoided at all cost. What is needed is leadership and strong voices calling for restraint, accountability and real reconciliation.

The current crisis has already undone much of Burundi's recent political, economic and social progress. The international community, in particular the Council, contributed significantly to those gains. But their main driver was public confidence in the stability and safety of the country. The Government must urgently take public and concrete steps to restore such confidence, which is essential to preventing recourse to violence and to returning Burundi to the path of peace, national harmony and development.

The President: I thank Mr. Al Hussein for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dieng.

Mr. Dieng: I thank the President of the Security Council, Mr. Matthew Rycroft, for convening this meeting and for extending an invitation to me to

brief members on the situation in Burundi from the perspective of my mandate.

I last briefed the Council on the situation in Burundi last May, following my visit to Burundi. I observed then that, although the crisis in Burundi was primarily political in nature, some senior Burundian leaders were manipulating the issue of ethnicity to advance their political interests. I warned that, if they continued to do so, the result could be an increase in violence in which individuals could be targeted based on their political or ethnic affiliation.

Unfortunately, that is what has happened. The country appears to be on the verge of descending into violence that could escalate to atrocity crimes. The ongoing efforts to promote dialogue have not succeeded in bringing the Government and the opposition to common ground.

The violence and human rights violations reported during the recent period include the assassination of senior members of the security forces and high-profile individuals affiliated with both the ruling party and the opposition, as well as targeted killings of ordinary civilians.

We are also witnessing the continued militarization of opposition political parties and actors, both inside and outside Burundi. Those supporting the opposition have carried out targeted killings across the country. The violence has escalated tensions and further destabilized the country. My Office has received reports of civilians fleeing from areas perceived to be sympathetic to the opposition for fear of attacks.

I was alarmed by the speech given on 29 October by Révérien Ndikuriyo, the President of the Senate, in which he used inflammatory and threatening language. Some of the language used was very similar to that used before and during the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, during which Hutu moderates and others were killed, in particular the repeated use of the word *gukora*, which means "to work" in Kirundi and was used to incite people to commit genocide in Rwanda in 1994. This speech adds to the fear that ruling-party officials may be preparing the ground for widespread violence in Burundi.

It is therefore critical that the President and the senior leadership refrain from making or uttering any statement that could be considered as inciting populations to commit crimes against their fellow citizens. To do so is both dangerous and irresponsible, and it is prohibited under international law.

If there was ever a time for President Nkurunziza and his Government to display responsible and courageous leadership, it is now. For the sake of all Burundians, we need the Government to commit to restoring peace and security through dialogue and to take a series of concrete steps to de-escalate the current crisis. At the same time, this responsibility does not lie with Burundi's Government alone; the international community, in particular the East African Community, the African Union and the United Nations have an indispensable role to play in restoring peace to Burundi.

In its October communiqué, the African Union's Peace and Security Council expressed its determination to impose sanctions against those perpetrating violence, called for the deployment of additional human rights monitors, including by the African Union Commission, to investigate the ongoing violations, and requested the African Union Commission to develop contingency planning for the potential deployment of a peacekeeping mission to protect civilians. This strong commitment must be followed through with action and supported by the international community.

To deter further violence, the Security Council should take urgent measures to prevent the situation from escalating, including by providing full support to the immediate implementation of the decisions of the African Union Peace and Security Council. The deployment of African Union human rights monitors could be a key deterrent against human rights violations and abuses. The Council could urge the Government of Burundi to finalize negotiations with the African Union on the presence of these monitors, so that they can be deployed, have unrestricted access and carry out their mandate without hindrance.

Another essential factor that would contribute to preventing the situation from escalating further is the taking of measures that could act as a deterrent by putting in place measures to hold accountable those who may commit acts of violence and incite violence. The persistent accountability gap and prevailing impunity for ongoing serious human rights violations and abuses, including discourse that constitutes incitement to violence, is fuelling the crisis in Burundi. Such measures could include the immediate establishment of a commission of inquiry to investigate the ongoing violations, as recommended by the African Union. It is

also important to remind Burundi that, as a State party to the International Criminal Court, those inciting or engaging in atrocity crimes will risk criminal prosecution.

Burundi is at a crossroads, and the international community needs to wake up to this reality. No one should underestimate what is at stake. The civil war between 1993 and 2005 cost over 300,000 lives and displaced more than 1 million people in Burundi. The country's history and that of its neighbour Rwanda have shown the tragic consequences of failing to act when leaders incite or fail to contain violence. Beyond the possible human toll, a return to conflict would put the Arusha Agreement at risk and have destabilizing consequences for the entire region. We should act before it is too late. The United Nations has invested heavily in Burundi and cannot fail to take appropriate action now. I urge the Security Council to send a clear and united message to the Government in Bujumbura that it has an obligation to sit down with the opposition to address their differences peacefully. The Council should also call on all actors to renounce the use of violence. Only a sincere and constructive dialogue can avert the impending catastrophe in Burundi.

I should also invite the Council to urge the Government to bring to justice all perpetrators of human rights violations and crimes being committed. My Office and other experts and institutions have stressed that without unity in the Council on the situation in Burundi, and the action that must be taken to reverse the current crisis, Burundi may slide back into a chaos with which we are all too familiar. Given the clear information we have about the gravity of the situation, we will not be able to claim, if a full-scale conflict erupts, that we did not know. The international community has a responsibility to protect Burundians and to prevent the commission of atrocity crimes.

The President: I thank Mr. Dieng for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lauber.

Mr. Lauber: I welcome the opportunity to brief the Security Council on my first visit to Burundi in my capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The objective of my visit is to establish direct contact with the Government of Burundi and other key stakeholders to gain a first-hand understanding of the current political situation and to learn of the Government's plans on how to address it. I am also exploring opportunities for the future engagement of the PBC and the contributions that the Commission could make to ease tensions.

Today was the first day of my visit, and I would like to give a brief account of the meetings with representatives of the Government, the United Nations country team, the Special Envoy of the African Union and members of the diplomatic community. I had open and substantial discussions with the second Vice-President of Burundi as well as with the Minister of External Relations and International Cooperation. Those talks focused on the security situation, efforts to initiate the political dialogue among Burundians, the socioeconomic situation of the country, and partnership with regional and international actors. I encourage the Government to intensify its engagement with the international community, namely, with the East African Community, the African Union, the European Union, bilateral partners and, of course, the United Nations system.

I also expressed the hope that the Government would engage in an inclusive and genuine dialogue process in order to restore trust among the Burundian people. I encouraged my interlocutors to accept offers of international assistance or de-escalation measures such as the disarmament of armed groups. I also expressed my concern about inflammatory rhetoric that could incite hatred among different groups of Burundian society. Both the second Vice-President and the Minister reiterated the Government's interest in continued cooperation with the PBC Burundi configuration.

The continuing violence, insecurity and ongoing human rights violations appear to be key concerns for my United Nations interlocutors, who have highlighted that the situation negatively impacts the operations of the United Nations in Burundi. Let me express my deep regrets over the deaths of two United Nations staff members who have fallen victim to this violence within the past three weeks. I should also like to seize this opportunity to commend the work of the United Nations team on the ground, which is working under difficult circumstances.

Tomorrow and on Wednesday, I will meet with the First Vice-President and the Minister of the Interior of Burundi, as well as with different stakeholders, including civil society actors, political parties, the Inter-Burundian Dialogue Commission and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I will also meet with representatives of international financial institutions.

An audience with the President of the Republic is scheduled for Wednesday.

As I continue consultations, I will reiterate my appeal to all stakeholders to refrain from violence, both physical and rhetorical. I will further discuss the impact of the current situation on the economy of Burundi. I will then continue my mission to Uganda, where I will meet with the Minister of Defence, Mr. Crispus Kiyonga, who has been charged by President Museveni with facilitating the dialogue among Burundians mandated by the East African Community. On Friday, I will meet representatives of the Government of Tanzania, the World Bank and the East African Community in Dar es Salaam before returning to New York.

Upon my return to New York, I will prepare a report that will outline, inter alia, peacebuilding challenges emerging from the current situation, as well as opportunities and priorities for the PBC engagement in 2016. The report will be shared with the members of the PBC Burundi configuration at the debriefing on 18 November, as well as with the Security Council, as per established practice and in line with the advisory role of the PBC. The report will also inform the work plan for PBC engagement in Burundi in 2016.

The President: I thank Mr. Lauber for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. António.

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): We greet all those who have spoken before me, as well as the Ambassador of Uganda, who shall speak later. At the outset, on behalf of the African Union, allow me to express our sincere gratitude to the Security Council for giving us this opportunity to speak at this crucial moment in the history of Burundi. The full text of our statement will be made available to Council members, given the limited time at our disposal.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the deep gratitude of the African Union to the East African Community and the leaders of the region, including those of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. We also thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and all our bilateral and multilateral partners.

We note with concern that, since April, the peace that was hard won by Burundians is being put to the test. Burundi faces a serious political and security crisis, marked by increasing violence and serious violations of human rights. In addition, more than 200,000 Burundians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries, including Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.

Even as the Security Council meets here, the security situation continues to deteriorate. Initially concentrated in the capital, Bujumbura, insecurity and armed violence have spread recently to some localities of the interior. Targeted assassinations of political and military figures, extrajudicial killings, acts of torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment, arbitrary arrests and illegal detentions, clashes between police and armed elements, the regular discovery of corpses in the streets in some neighbourhoods, among other manifestations, have become the almost daily lot of the Burundian population. I also note with deep concern the inflammatory statements issued by political leaders. However such statements may be explained away, they are simply unacceptable in view of the painful past of the Great Lakes region, which, more than any other region of the continent, has suffered the pangs of mass violence.

The Government of Burundi has reported on its efforts to restore security throughout nation, particularly in the so-called protest districts of the capital. While the Government estimates that it has recovered over 90 per cent of the weapons held by civilians in the course of its disarmament operations, it is clear that these efforts have not yet succeeded in restoring calm on the ground. On the contrary, we are witnessing, both on the part of the Burundian Government and of some of those contesting the President's third term, a hardening of positions and methods, as well as a serious resurgence of violence.

Faced with the growing deterioration of the political and security situation, and the real threat of a widespread confrontation in Burundi, the African Union has stepped up its initiatives to bring peace and stability to that still-fragile country. The Peace and Security Council, at its meeting held on the sidelines of the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Head of State of the African Union, held in Johannesburg in June, agreed on a road map articulating actions that it was important to take to resolve the tension, avoid a spiral of violence and enable Burundi to preserve the benefits of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which is the very foundation of the social and political pact between the various components of the Burundian people.

In addition to her previous efforts, the President of the African Union Commission, Ms. Nkosazana

Dlamini-Zuma has repeatedly made similar calls on the parties, particularly after the assassinations of General Adolphe Nshimirimana and Colonel Jean Bikomagu. These calls having not been heeded by all Burundian stakeholders, our continental organization again met in its Peace and Security Council on 17 October. On that occasion, the Council decided, inter alia, to impose targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes against all Burundian actors whose actions and words had contributed to the ongoing violence and hindered the search for a solution to the crisis. It also requested the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to launch a thorough investigation into violations of human rights and other abuses against civilians in Burundi.

In addition, the Peace and Security Council decided to increase the number of military experts and human rights observers deployed on the ground to help contain the violence and create conditions conducive to a political dialogue among the actors concerned. Similarly, the Commission was requested to begin drafting a plan for the possible deployment of an African-led mission to Burundi. Follow-up actions are being taken.

The escalation of violence and targeted assassinations against high-ranking Burundians, combined with political radicalization and rumors of military activity, attest to the volatility of the situation and highlight the already obvious need to work for a political solution to the current crisis. In that regard, let me echo the conviction expressed by the African Union Peace and Security Council that only a genuine and inclusive dialogue based on respect for the Arusha Agreement would allow the Burundian stakeholders to find a consensual solution, maintain the peace and consolidate democracy and the rule of law.

The African Union strongly supports the efforts led by President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and therefore welcomes the visit to Burundi undertaken on 28 and 29 October by the Ugandan Minister of Defence, Mr. Crispus Kiyonga, in order to discuss with the Burundian authorities the modalities for resuming dialogue.

In conclusion, I reiterate the call of the African Union to the Government of Burundi and other stakeholders concerned to weigh the gravity of situation and rise to the challenge. The future of their nation and the stability of the region depend on it.

For its part, as the Peace and Security Council has pointed out, the African Union is determined to fully assume its responsibilities under the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and other relevant African instruments, in collaboration with the international actors concerned.

The President: I thank Mr. António for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation of Burundi.

Mr. Nyamitwe (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Let me first thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting, which is indeed very important for our country. I should also like to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I also thank all other members of the Security Council who continue to make praiseworthy efforts that demonstrate their attentiveness to my country, Burundi. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Adama Dieng and Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein for their efforts and good counsel with regard to Burundi.

My statement will be structured around a few points: the political situation, security and disarmament, the question of refugees, relations with Burundi's partners, economic and social development and some recommendations with regard to the international community.

With regard to dialogue, I must say that dialogue and consultation are part of the traditions of our country. It is therefore necessary and fitting that, when necessary, Burundians should sit down at the table and discuss the issues that divide them, or reflect more upon the issues that unite them. This good practice should absolutely be implemented and I believe that the region, the African Union, the United Nations and we ourselves are saying the same thing when we say that it is essential that there be a dialogue with regard to questions that are of great importance for our country. The terms and conditions may vary, but we agree on the whole that there is a need for dialogue. Of course, our delegation reaffirms that dialogue will continue, as it characterizes good governance and ensures national cohesion. This noble task falls primarily to Burundians themselves, even if we cannot deny the contribution of friends seeking to strengthen national cohesion.

It is in this context also that the Head of State, following lengthy consultations, established the Inter-Burundian Dialogue Commission, which is politically, ethnically and religiously inclusive and promises to study the issues in depth, bringing together far more people and stakeholders around a common theme or themes. During its mandate, the Commission will have to address issues related to politics; social relations; the economy; the strengthening of peace and security; even an assessment of the Arusha Peace Agreement, which was signed 15 years ago; the reading and understanding of our Constitution; the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement; the Charter of National Unity that was adopted by referendum 24 years ago; education programmes and patriotic training; and so on. The Inter-Burundian Dialogue Commission will have a six-month mandate, which can be extended if needed. It will issue quarterly reports to be submitted to the Head of State for his decision and implementation. Copies of these reports will be submitted to both chambers of our Parliament, the National Assembly and the Senate.

At this stage, I should like to clarify the position of our country vis-à-vis the regional efforts of the East African Community concerning the dialogue. We are in permanent contact with the Ugandan facilitation, with President Museveni, through the Minister of Defence, Mr. Crispus Kiyonga, who was in Burundi a little over a week ago for talks with the authorities of my country on the path to follow in the coming days so that Burundians and Burundian political partners can spend more time studying the issues that currently divide them.

From this point of view, allow me to once again lay to rest certain misunderstandings. Our Government is not against the dialogue recommended by the East African Community Summit, on 6 July in Dar es Salaam. On the contrary, as I said earlier, we may have differences of opinion on the terms, but overall we agree on what is most important, which is that dialogue must take place.

On the security front, our delegation wishes to inform the Council that the entire country is generally calm and that citizens are going about their activities peacefully, except for in a few well-defined areas in certain neighbourhoods of Bujumbura. In that regard, I would question the reliability of the information that has been provided at this meeting by Mr. Téte António of the African Union. I do not know if it was the African Union Mission in Bujumbura that informed him that insecurity was spreading to other regions and other cities outside Bujumbura. I wish he would inform us of what cities and give us the names of those places that are lacking security in the country, outside of certain neighbourhoods of Bujumbura, because that is surprising information.

Contrary to the information conveyed by the foreign-based radical opposition and by some affiliated media, Burundi is not burning. The few incidents of crime aimed at attracting the attention of the international community are being controlled. As the Council knows, security is the cornerstone of everything, because in its absence no beneficial action or development is possible. Burundians yearn for peace and equality and are committed to maintaining it day and night with determination. There are several peacebuilding initiatives in various parts of the country, but these have unfortunately been ignored by the media, which are content to report only on the violence and chaos that supposedly reign in the country.

With regard to disarmament, our delegation reiterates the commitment of the Government of Burundi to pursue its disarmament programme through prevention and dialogue. The Council will recall that, on 24 September, Decree 100/36 was signed, exempting unlawful possession of firearms from criminal prosecution, giving an extension of one month to any person living in Burundi in illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and/or related material, and allowing them to immediately and voluntarily return such material to the defence and security forces. This act of clemency on the part of our Government to those weapons-bearers allowed them to voluntarily surrender their weapons and not be penalized.

Perhaps this is also an opportunity to clarify the legitimacy of the decision to extend that time frame by a few days. The decision was made in order to provide an opportunity to those illegally in possession of weapons to surrender them directly to the authorities, because, in Burundi as elsewhere, unlawful firearm possession is not permitted and even less so the use of weapons against security forces or against peaceful citizens. It therefore goes without saying that, in an organized State, security forces must be able to fulfil their mandate comprehensively.

The defense and security forces must therefore continue search-and-seizure operations in order to seize illegally held weapons. Over the course of

those operations, numerous weapons and military paraphernalia were seized, as well as medications and narcotics, which are put into the service of those criminals. Two months after the Government's commitment to restore peace to the country, the mission entrusted to the defence and security forces was 92 per cent successful. As of the end of October, 139 rifles, 151 grenades and other explosives, 7,151 cartridges and 151 loaders were seized. Since the beginning of the year until the end of October, the permanent national commission for the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons had already collected more than 400 rifles, 440 grenades and explosives, 12,455 cartridges and 416 loaders.

Allow me to clarify, for in the framework of those operations, and following an ultimatum that has been misinterpreted in certain circles, what has transpired has not been fully understood in the Council. In a spirit of transparency, since the fall bgan such operations have been conducted in the presence of African Union monitors. That was done under a mandate entrusted to them during a meeting of the Peace and Security Council that took place on 13 June in Johannesburg, which was later reinforced by a decision taken on 17 October. The monitors are therefore part of the operations, thereby illustrating our Government's intentions of good faith to work with its partners.

Today, our Government calls on the perpetrators of those crimes to renounce an approach that will lead nowhere. The path of violence is a dead end, a waste of time and an obstacle to the future of our youth, who are so necessary to rebuilding our country. The five-day extension, which expired on 7 November, was an opportunity to put an end to the situation. I point this out to Mr. Al Hussein. I think that we all agree that it is important that human rights abuses be avoided at all costs and that they do not go unpunished. It is crucial to know how to reconcile the duty of the State in shouldering its responsibilities in ensuring security at the national level, but it is also extremely important — and I fully endorse what Mr. Al Hussein, Mr. Dieng and others have just said — that there needs to be a demonstration of authority in the management of those issues, and specifically disarmament, so as to avoid violations that would undermine peace and security in my country.

With regard to the issue of refugees, it has been clearly established that we must do everything possible to ensure that that those who fled the country owing to the political situation at the time, particularly in April, are able to return. That is the reason that the Government is in contact with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and those countries that welcomed our brothers and sisters, so that we can engage the tripartite commission with the aim of repatratriating the refugees. I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to neighbouring countries that have hosted refugees. We know that that is no easy task. In the past, our country also hosted refugees for several years. We therefore understand that it is a costly endeavour, especially when such a situation occurs suddenly.

We also call upon our partners to take allegations seriously. I think Mr. Al Hussein correctly addressed that issue earlier. I cannot say enough how much we deplore the fact that some refugee camps have become grounds for recruiting young people to fill the ranks of rebel groups, and who in turn will continue to disrupt peace and security in the country. We believe that the way the refugee camps such as the one in Mahama, Rwanda, are being managed is extremely ill-advised. I believe that even the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region had the opportunity on more than one occasion to highlight that we want to uncategorically build our region in peace and security, and that of course entails the proper management of the refugee camps.

With regard to rebuilding trust with our partners, my delegation would ask our traditional and non-traditional partners to continue to focus on the future of the country. I believe that this morning's meeting with the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission was once again an opportunity to ask him to plead in my country's favour, so that we can all move towards the future together. Our country still needs its friends. We will not be able to rebuild our country without the contribution of traditional partners, with whom we have had a bitter-sweet relationship but who nevertheless came back to support us after we obtained our sovereignty, in 1962, so that we could offer more opportunities to participate with others in the world in the new era of globalization. We therefore believe that threats by some of suspending development assistance runs counter to the noble goal of building a more equitable and just world. For we think that the Burundian people have the same rights as everyone else.

To certain members of the Security Council and others of the European Union, we would like to clarify that we did receive the request from that organization to open consultations with Burundi on the basis of article 96 of the Cotonou agreement. That concerns human rights matters, the state of democracy and governance. We have received that correspondence and are in full consultations so as to willingly provide an appropriate response within the set time frame to our partners. In any case, our intention remains one of maintaining increasing beneficial cooperation among our people and European and other partners.

Within the framework of rebuilding confidence, my delegation humbly requests that countries in the North, as well as in the South, that continue to harbour individuals accused of reprehensible international and national crimes, such as those who were implicated in the coup of 13 May 2015 — as well as other wrongdoers — that they cooperate with our Government so that they can be prosecuted. I believe that that is not just a matter of human rights. Other parties need to cooperate too. That is very important.

In upholding the Charter of the United Nations we also would ask that certain individuals, who are part of destabilizing activities after the elections of 2015 and the coup d'état, would stop being supported and disseminating destabilizing messages from their host country, as those are not acts apt to favorize friendly relations and cooperation among countries. For its part, the Government of Burundi is committed to pursuing peaceful diplomacy with its partners on the principle of reciprocity. We have seen that unfriendly actions by neighbouring countries and others is extremely destructive. On that account, I would like to state that it is noteworthy that we have demonstrated peaceful gestures towards our neighbours and will continue our policy of good-neighbourliness whatever situation we happen to encounter.

Over the years, my country has always demonstrated restraint. There have been no notable acts of aggression against its neighbours, and we shall maintain that policy of good-neighbourliness, despite the turbulence that we are currently experiencing. We intend to establish a new framework for growth and combating poverty. We would therefore request the support of our traditional and our non-traditional partners in carrying out the far-reaching project of eliminating poverty in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The Burundi configuration will play a key role therein, just as it has a key role of mobilizing resources in other post-conflict countries. That role will become crucial. within the framework of establishing a bridge between Burundi and its partners in the restoration of trust between the parties.

I should like to make a few of the most important recommendations to the international community concerning the current situation in Burundi.

First, the end of the electoral process provides an opportunity to evaluate the evolution of the democratic culture in the country. It is also a good time to note the strengths and weaknesses that will allow all players to draw lessons learned so as to better prepare for the future.

Secondly, there is a vital need for investment in the economy and in community-rebuilding through generous financing for projects that create employment for youth, women and other vulnerable individuals, which will offer them an alternative to violence.

Thirdly, to the extent possible, it is important to avoid resort to sanctions, which are ineffective in many ways. They not only affect the most vulnerable, but they also radicalize base positions on the political situation.

Fourthly, support for the inter-Burundian national dialogue at all levels is a sound approach that will have the positive effect of encouraging the Government and the opposition to act together in the interests of the country. The dialogue will allow citizens to share their views on questions that divide the Burundian people, and to find lasting solutions for lasting reconciliation,

Fifthly, it is vital to cooperate and engage in dialogue with the Government of Burundi and other stakeholders instead of hardening positions by issuing contradictory press communiqués and adopting selective sanctions vis-à-vis certain players in Burundi. The head-on confrontation with our partners of the past few days must stop. It is essential to rebuild trust in good faith together through frank and sincere dialogue.

By way of conclusion, allow me simply to state to all those who have taken the floor that while we understand those of their concerns that may be justified, the Government nonetheless remains ready to work further with its partners at the regional and continental levels. Our first priority is to allay any fear of the genocide that has been widely touted in the press. We must do our utmost to ensure an end to the flow of

Burundian blood. Even one death in the country is a national tragedy.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

Mr. Nduhuura (Uganda): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, the United Kingdom, on your assumption of the Security Council presidency for this month and for organizing this important meeting on the security situation in Burundi. I also thank you for inviting Uganda to brief the Council on the efforts of the East African Community to facilitate dialogue in Burundi.

Until recently, Burundi had been a success story, based on the efforts undertaken by the region to address insecurity in the country. The efforts of the region led to the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. The Heads of State of the countries of the region have continued to provide their support for peace-building efforts in Burundi. Fifteen years after the signing of the Arusha Agreement, all the country's political leaders, including those in exile, must aim to find common cause and commit to building on the stability that was ushered in by the Agreement.

Uganda underscores the role of regional and subregional organizations in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations and the international community should support the efforts of regional and subregional organizations to address the challenges relating to peace and security, human rights and development.

On 31 May, an emergency summit of the East African Community was convened on the situation in Burundi. Those attending the summit included His Excellency Mr. Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa and guarantor of the Arusha Accord, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, and the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. The Heads of State were concerned about the violence in Bujumbura and other parts of Burundi that had led to the deaths of many people, as well as to the influx of refugees into neighbouring countries and the destruction of property. The summit called upon all parties to stop the violence and exercise restraint.

At the third extraordinary summit of the Heads of State of the East African Community, held on 6 July, His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, was asked to lead and facilitate a high-level dialogue in a bid to find a lasting solution to the political situation and to ensure that peace returns to Burundi. Accordingly, on 14 and 15 July, President Museveni was in Burundi and met with all the stakeholders in a bid to create momentum for dialogue. The President has also been in contact with the Secretary-General and leaders in the region.

Subsequently, President Museveni delegated The Honourable Chrispus Kiyonga, Uganda's Minister of Defence, to continue facilitating the dialogue in Burundi. On behalf of the President, the Minister traveled to Bujumbura and chaired a series of stakeholder meetings on 16, 17 and 18 July. In those engagements, the Minister underscored the need to find a durable political solution through dialogue among all parties and called on them to desist from incitement and violence. He left Bujumbura, and elections for the President took place on 21 July.

On 26 July, His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza sent his special envoys, Mr. Pascal Nyabenda, Speaker of the Burundi Parliament, and Mr. Agathon Rwasa, First Deputy Speaker, along with two other members of Parliament, to Kampala. It was further agreed that the East African Community-mandated dialogue must continue.

Uganda remains committed to facilitating the dialogue, as mandated by the Heads of State of the East African Community. In that regard, Mr. Kiyonga visited Bujumbura on 28 and 29 October in order to follow up on his assignment in Burundi. He held meetings with the President of the Senate and his two deputies; the President of the National Assembly with his two deputies, including Mr. Rwasa, who comes from the opposition; the Minister of Home Affairs; and the Commission appointed by President Nkuruziza to conduct the Inter-Burundi dialogue. In all the meetings he held with the officials mentioned previously, the Minister of Defence received similar, consistent messages indicating that while they welcome the East African Community intervention, their preference is for the Community to play an advisory role to the Commission.

Minister Kiyonga reiterated that the East African Community facilitation efforts would proceed as originally conceived, but would indeed work with the Commission. In the light of the Minister's position, the officials promised to get back to the Community

after consultations with their principal, His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi. In view of the recent meetings held in Bujumbura, we are optimistic that there will be progress. The next summit of the East African Community Heads of State is scheduled to take place on 30 November, and the security situation in Burundi will certainly be on the agenda.

It is important to note that the region has remained actively seized of the matter and that recently, on 20 October, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held a meeting of Ministers of Defence in Luanda, which discussed, inter alia, the security situation in Burundi. In its recommendations, the meeting, first, appreciated the efforts of the East African Community mediation process led by His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, in search of peace and stability in Burundi; and, secondly, welcomed the willingness of the Government of the Republic of Burundi to engage in an all-inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue on various themes to be conducted in and outside Burundi in consideration of peace and unity, as required by the people of the country. At the same time, the African Union Peace and Security Council has continuously demonstrated its ability to follow the security situation in Burundi closely, as reflected in its recently adopted communiqué of 17 October. All these regional efforts are consistent with Chapters VII and VIII of the United Nations Charter.

We stress the importance of coordination among international and regional efforts in supporting dialogue in Burundi. All efforts must be focused on a credible and inclusive dialogue aimed at re-establishing the trust and reconciliation that will ensure confidence-building among all parties and a return to the security and stability that will spur development in the country.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. We have heard how high the stakes are, and I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.